

Procedure file

| Basic information | | |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| CNS - Consultation procedure Decision | 1997/0204(CNS) | Procedure completed |
| Basic telecommunications services: résultats of the WTO negotiations | | |
| Subject 3.30.03 Telecommunications, data transmission, telephone 6.20.01 Agreements and relations in the context of the World Trade Organization (WTO) | | |

| Key players | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|------------|
| European Parliament | Committee responsible | Rapporteur | Appointed |
| | RELA External Economic Relations | | 25/02/1997 |
| | | GUE/NGL CASTELLINA Luciana | |
| Council of the European Union | Committee for opinion | Rapporteur for opinion | Appointed |
| | ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy | | 03/09/1997 |
| | DEVE Development and Cooperation | PPE VON WOGAU Karl | |
| Council of the European Union | Council configuration | Meeting | Date |
| | Development | 2052 | 28/11/1997 |
| | General Affairs | 1984 | 20/01/1997 |
| | General Affairs | 1958 | 28/11/1996 |
| | Telecommunications | 1888 | 27/11/1995 |

| Key events | | | |
|------------|---|------------------------------|---------|
| 27/11/1995 | Debate in Council | 1888 | |
| 28/11/1996 | Debate in Council | 1958 | |
| 20/01/1997 | Debate in Council | 1984 | |
| 15/07/1997 | Legislative proposal published | COM(1997)0368 | Summary |
| 15/09/1997 | Committee referral announced in Parliament | | |
| 07/10/1997 | Vote in committee | | Summary |
| 07/10/1997 | Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading | A4-0305/1997 | |
| 22/10/1997 | Decision by Parliament | T4-0493/1997 | Summary |

| | | | |
|------------|---|--|--|
| 28/11/1997 | Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament | | |
| 28/11/1997 | End of procedure in Parliament | | |
| 18/12/1997 | Final act published in Official Journal | | |

Technical information

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Procedure reference | 1997/0204(CNS) |
| Procedure type | CNS - Consultation procedure |
| Procedure subtype | International agreement |
| Legislative instrument | Decision |
| Legal basis | EC before Amsterdam E 228-p3-a1 |
| Stage reached in procedure | Procedure completed |
| Committee dossier | RELA/4/09253 |

Documentation gateway

| | | | | |
|---|---|------------|----|---------|
| Legislative proposal | COM(1997)0368 OJ C 267 03.09.1997, p. 0080 | 15/07/1997 | EC | Summary |
| Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading | A4-0305/1997 OJ C 339 10.11.1997, p. 0006 | 07/10/1997 | EP | |
| Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading | T4-0493/1997 OJ C 339 10.11.1997, p. 0046-0057 | 22/10/1997 | EP | Summary |

Additional information

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| European Commission | EUR-Lex |
|---------------------|-------------------------|

Final act

| |
|---|
| Decision 1997/838 OJ L 347 18.12.1997, p. 0045 Summary |
|---|

Basic telecommunications services: résultats of the WTO negotiations

OBJECTIVE: to approve, on behalf of the Community, the results of the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations on basic telecommunications services. **SUBSTANCE:** Following the negotiations between the Community and its WTO partners, a Fourth Protocol to the General Agreement on Trade in Services was concluded on 15.02.1997, as was a Ministerial Decision on Basic Telecommunications Services. A previous decision required the WTO partners to draw up schedules of specific commitments and exemptions regarding basic telecommunications services. All the partners, including the Community and its Member States, submitted these schedules to the WTO on 14.02.1997. The schedule represents the Community's commitments in this field. As regards the general substance of the commitments, the negotiations resulted in a level of commitments accounting for around 93% of the world market in basic telecommunications services. WTO members representing all continents made commitments on all basic telecommunications services subsectors, either immediately applicable or to be phased in. In addition, most schedules submitted by the partners contain additional commitments on regulatory principles. As regards the Community, the agreement allows the Union's telecommunications industries to benefit from greater legal certainty and predictability than previously. It benefits European industries as a whole as well as European consumers, and constitutes a real basis on which to negotiate further market-opening measures in the future.?

Basic telecommunications services: résultats of the WTO negotiations

The Committee adopted the report drawn up under the consultation procedure proposing that Parliament approve the outcome of the World Trade Organisation negotiations on basic telecommunications services. The fourth GATT protocol was adopted in Geneva on 15 February 1997. It was signed by 69 of the 130 WTO member states, representing 95% of the world market in the telecommunications industry, which is

valued at 600 billion dollars per annum. For the EU, ratification of the GATT agreement will mean that liberalisation of the internal telecoms market will be subject to the rules laid down by the WTO, which, however, has agreed to allow the rules to be implemented gradually for countries where the networks are small or not fully developed, i.e. Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Greece and Spain. The exclusion of the broadcasting sector from the agreement - despite resistance from the United States - means that EU Member States are not obliged to grant access to all programmes (especially in new areas such as video-on demand) supplied by other countries, such as the USA, which already accounts for 80% of the European broadcasting market. In conclusion, the committee drew attention to the following points: - the confused institutional arrangements in the foreign trade sphere, and the urgent need to amend the relevant legislation; - the need to . monitor implementation of the general principles laid down by the WTO; . assess the impact of the GATT agreements on developing countries and adopt special measures to ensure that they are not placed in an excessively difficult position; . consider the possible repercussions of the restrictions attached to the offers put forward by many countries (particularly the US) in a wide range of sectors, which have led to a blatant lack of reciprocity vis-à-vis the European Union; . clarify various aspects of the negotiations which remain rather unclear as far as broadcasting services are concerned. ?

Basic telecommunications services: résultats of the WTO negotiations

Adopting the report by Mrs Luciana CASTELLINA (GUE/NGL, I), the European Parliament approved the conclusion, on behalf of the Community, as regards matters within its competence, of the results of the WTO negotiations on basic telecommunications services.?

Basic telecommunications services: résultats of the WTO negotiations

OBJECTIVE: to approve, on behalf of the Community, the results of the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations on basic telecommunications services. COMMUNITY MEASURE: Council Decision 97/838/EC concerning the conclusion, on behalf of the European Community, as regards matters within its competence, of the results of the WTO negotiations on basic telecommunications services. SUBSTANCE: Following the negotiations between the Community and its WTO partners, a fourth protocol to the General Agreement on Trade in Services was concluded on 15.02.1997, as was a decision of the Council for Trade in Services on commitments in basic telecommunications. A previous decision called on WTO partners to draw up a list of specific commitments and exemptions concerning basic telecommunications services. The list notably included the Community's commitments in this respect. At the end of the negotiations, the total level of bilateral commitments represented a cover of some 93% of the world market in basic telecommunications services. These commitments concerned all subsectors of basic telecommunications services and were applicable immediately or in stages. Other commitments concerned regulatory principles. As regards the Community, the Agreement permits the Union's telecommunications industry to enjoy a more secure legal status and greater predictability. The European industry as a whole and European consumers will benefit from the Agreement, which provides a basis for the negotiation of other measures to open up markets in the future. ENTRY INTO FORCE: The protocol enters into force on 01.01.1998 on condition that it has been accepted by all the members concerned.?